

**Government-to-Government Relationships  
Annual Report  
January-December 2008**

It is the policy of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) to promote positive and cooperative government-to-government relations with the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon. ODVA continues these efforts by building and strengthening our working relationships with the Oregon tribes. This annual report is respectfully submitted to Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski and the Commission of Indian Services to outline ODVA's activities and communication.

Continued efforts to strengthen relationships with the Native American tribes of Oregon are mutually beneficial for Government-to-Government effectiveness. This report identifies ODVA's activities during the 2008 calendar year.

**2008 Government-to-Government Activities and Communication**

- The ODVA Salem Claims and Counseling staff partnered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other State and Federal Agencies in disaster relief efforts from the winter storms and floods of 2007. (January)
- History was made in 2008 as Eugene J. LaBonte, became the Vice-Chair of the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC). Labonte, a US Navy veteran of the Vietnam-era, is the first Native American to sit on the VAAC, which has already enjoyed a high degree of diversity. In addition to the duties he fulfills with the VAAC, he sits on the Legislative Affairs and Annual Report subcommittees. Labonte is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. (March)
- The 2008 Women Veterans Conference hosted in Pendleton, Oregon featured a Native American veteran as a guest speaker. Virginia Beavert, a resident of the state of Washington, delivered remarks about her experiences during World War II. There were also Native American veterans that attended the event. (April)
- ODVA Director Jim Willis, Deputy Director Paula Brown, administrators, and staff members attended the 2008 Tribal Information Day at the Oregon State Capitol. The event focused on honoring, protecting and enhancing the cultural and natural resources of their Tribes by sharing information and experiences during the event. (May)
- On Memorial Day, the Grand Ronde Honor Guard posted the colors at a ceremony honoring the fallen soldiers of Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. The Grand Ronde Honor Guard posted the colors at the ceremony held at the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial located on the grounds of ODVA. (May)
- On Memorial Day, Deputy Director Paula Brown delivered a speech at the West Valley Veterans Memorial on the grounds of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde. Governor Theodore R. Kulongoski delivered the keynote speech at the event. Governor Kulongoski, a Marine Corps veteran, is the first Oregon Governor to have his name inscribed on the veteran memorial. (May)

- Several ODVA administrators, managers, and staff members attended the 2008 Tribal Information Day at the Oregon State Capitol. (May)
- Each year the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA) provides County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) training. A veterans representative of the Siletz tribe attended the 2008 meeting held in The Dalles. (May)
- Director Jim Willis attended the Sixteenth Annual Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Veterans' Pow-Wow from July 1-3. ODVA Veterans' Service Officers provided direct outreach for veterans seeking more information about veteran benefits and services. (July)
- On July 18, the Oregon Military Department (OMD) and ODVA hosted a military celebration honoring the 60th anniversary of the desegregation of the US Armed Forces. Director Jim Willis and ODVA staff members participated and attended the event. The honor guard of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde posted the colors for the event. Additionally, ODVA published a *VETS NEWS* article about the event that included Native American military veterans. (July)
- On August 14, Eugene Labonte of the VAAC, attended the Legislative Subcommittee meeting. (August)
- Dave Cooley, the manager of ODVA's Salem Claims and Counseling, attended an annual training at Camp Chapparral. The training for veteran service providers was held in August. Sponsored by the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs (USDVA), the training provides an understanding of Native American culture. The training provides a higher level of learning necessary for serving Native American veteran. (August)
- In 2008, ODVA supported the planning of the Oregon All Military Gala. The All Military Gala was titled sponsored by Spirit Mountain Casino. Spirit Mountain is part of the Confederate Tribes of the Grand Ronde. In support of the event, a full-page advertisement published in the Statesman Journal to raise awareness, which included key contact information for ODVA. (August)
- Director Jim Willis attended the presentation of the Oregon Honorable Service Medal at Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City. (September)
- On November 12th and 13<sup>th</sup> Deputy Director Paula Brown attended the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Government-to-Government Summit for the state of Oregon. The Department provided materials in support of the event. Eugene J. LaBonte, the Vice-Chair of the VAAC also attended the event. (November)
- Invited Tribal Veteran Service Officers to the annual County Veteran Service Officer (CVSO) training. (Annually)
- Continued to invite the members of tribal governments to attend quarterly meetings of ODVA's Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC). (Quarterly)

- Throughout the year, tribal governments are invited to participate in leadership meetings with the ODVA. This included invitations to the leadership meetings held under Executive Order 08-08: Governor's Task Force on Veterans Services.
- Maintained the information of the nine federally recognized Oregon tribes in the Veterans' Service Officers Directory. The tribal information is also accessible through the ODVA website along with direct and indirect links including, but not limited to: home loans, VA Native American program, Indian Heritage, and Native Americans in the US military.
- Promoted and reported on tribal veteran issues, news, and events online at [www.oregon.gov/odva](http://www.oregon.gov/odva) and in the bi-monthly VETS NEWS publication.

### **Planned Tribal Activities and Interactions for 2009**

- ODVA will continue to invite members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes to attend the quarterly Veterans' Affairs Advisory Committee meetings.
- Work continues on a publication of veterans' memorials. This publication will also contain tribal veterans' memorials. ODVA will seek their assistance in gathering information.
- ODVA will continue and encourage participation in the Tribal Information Day at the Oregon State Capitol.
- The Director, Deputy Director, and other appropriate staff will continue to attend meetings and events held by tribes or pertaining to tribal veterans affairs.
- Continued involvement in the Oregon Government-to-Government Summit will include ODVA representatives.
- The ODVA office will continue including the nine federally recognized tribes and tribal Veterans Service Officers in the Veterans' Service Officers Directory.
- ODVA and the Public Information staff will continue to promote and report on tribal veteran issues and events both online at [www.oregon.gov/odva](http://www.oregon.gov/odva) and in the bi-monthly VETS NEWS publication.
- ODVA Veterans' Services section will continue to invite the Tribal Veterans' Service Officers to annual CVSO training.